

Leveraging Research to Better Serve Your Community

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What is the point?

- Doing research in your community doesn't have to be costly and doesn't have to be time consuming.
- How can you conduct research simply and cheaply that will improve your community outreach.

Critical question

- Critical question is not how to do cheap research – but rather what world-view should drive the need for research and evaluation.

Where are we going?

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to, “ said the Cat.

“I don’t much care where —“ said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.

“—so long as I get SOMEWHERE,” Alice added as an explanation.

“Oh, you’re sure to do that,” said the Cat,

“if you only walk long enough.”

(From *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*
by Lewis Carroll.)



Need for thinking and planning proactively

- We live in highly volatile times
- We can choose to simply react...
- Or – plan based on known information
 - systematic planning helps businesses and organizations achieve their short-term objectives and reach their long-term goals.

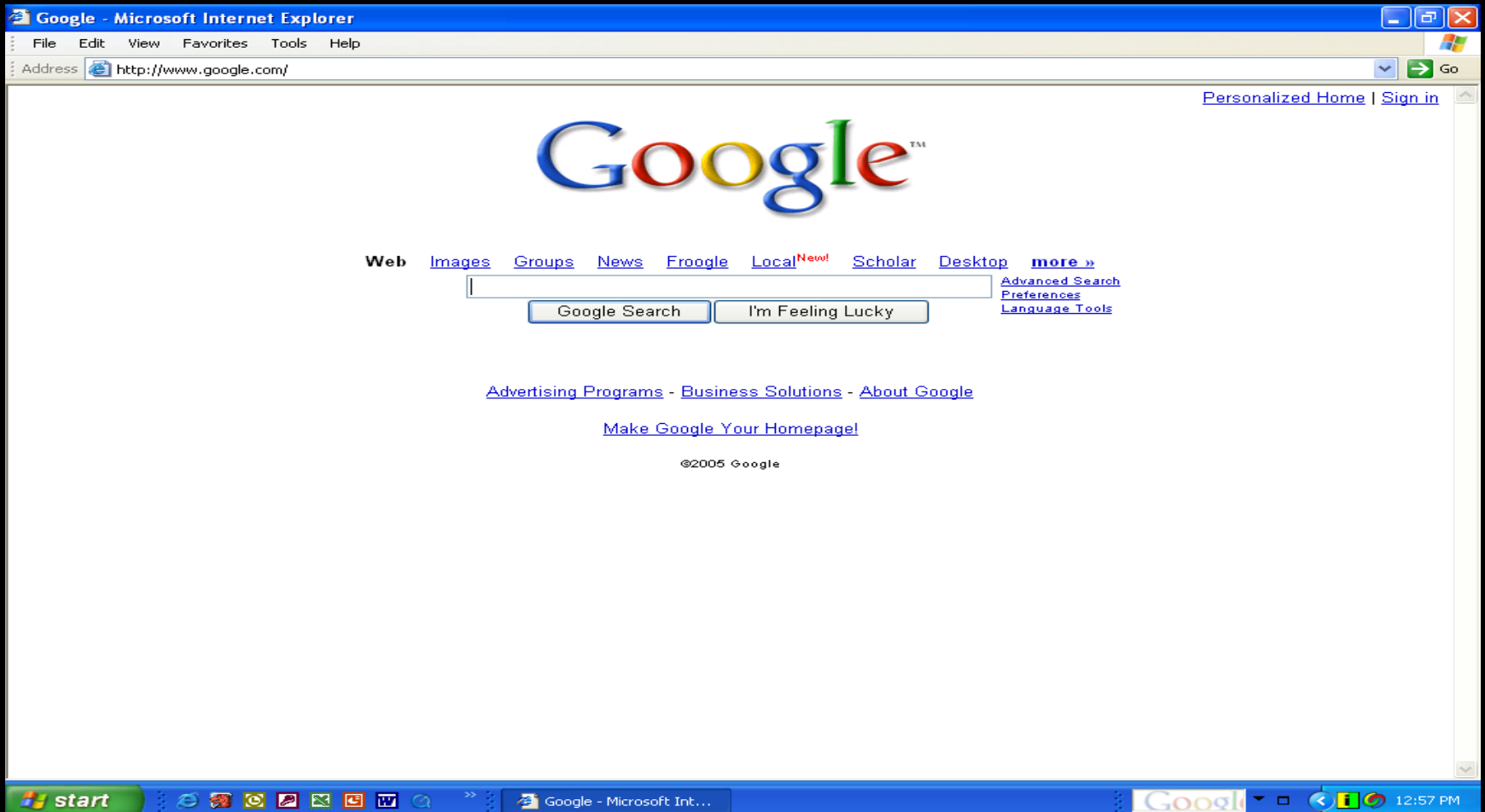
Areas

- Using available data
- Systematic observation
- Low-cost survey research
- Backward research

Using available data...

- Many people think that doing research means going into the field to collect data yourself.
- It is more costly to gather new data than to analyze existing data.
- There is a goldmine of data in every organization and readily available in already collected databases.

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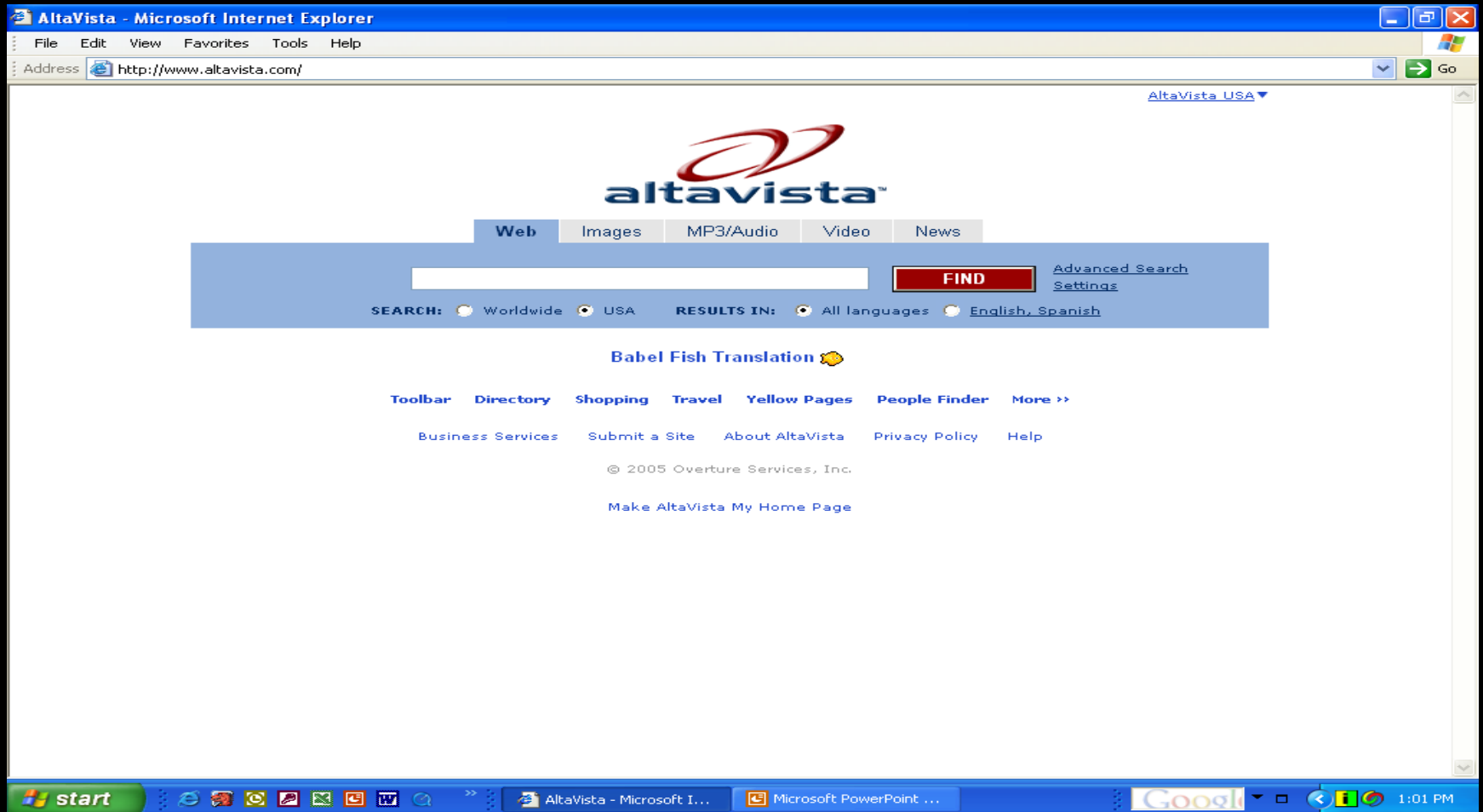
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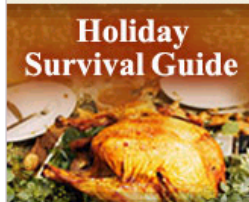
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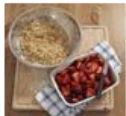
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"It's a damned good thing to remember in politics to stick to your party and never attempt to buy the favor of your enemies at the expense of your friends."
— Rep. Joseph G. Cannon (R-Ill.), who served as Speaker of the House from 1903-1911. He served in the House for 46 years (*L. White Busby, Uncle Joe Cannon (1927)*)



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HOT ISSUES

Tips For Seniors On Medicare Drug Benefit

Medicare prescription drug plans opened for enrollment on Nov. 15, 2005. Seniors have six months to figure out dozens of complex plans and sign up before prices rise. See FTCR's ["Five Questions"](#) seniors need to ask and get the details on drug plans.



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Phone / mapping of area

Phone Number Lookup - InfoSpace - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Reload Home Search Favorites Print Mail News RSS Feeds

Address http://www.infospace.com/home/white-pages/reverse-phone Go

InfoSpace®

Names, Numbers, Now™

What do you want to search?

- home
- yellow pages
- white pages
- web search
- maps & directions
- browse categories
- search by phone
- near an address
- email search
- world directories

REVERSE LOOKUP

[Address Lookup](#)
[Email Lookup](#)
[Area Code Lookup](#)
[ZIP Code Lookup](#)
[International Dialing Codes Lookup](#)

Phone Number Lookup
Match a phone number to a name.

☐ Business ☒ Residential

004 - 208 - 3413

You may use a partial phone number

Looking for the InfoSpace Corporate Web site?

- InfoSpace Corporate
- InfoSpace Mobile
- Search & Directory

Free Toolbar
Make Your Homepage
Resources
Classifieds
Weather
Horoscopes
Public Records
My Lookup History
Bookmark this Page
Help

Download the InfoSpace Toolbar

Get instant access to an unbeatable collection of search tools.

infospace About InfoSpace | Mobile | Search & Directory | Advertise With Us | Careers | Press | Investor Relations

InfoSpace Search Network: Dogpile | WebCrawler | MetaCrawler | InfoSpace | Switchboard
InfoSpace Search Resources: Search Engines | Yellow Pages | White Pages | Town Directories | Business Categories | Maps

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E F Martin White Pages Details - InfoSpace - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Reload Home Search Favorites Print Mail News RSS Feeds

Address http://levdb.infospace.com/home/white-pages/levdb/showrec=100184546;res-us0TMPL=/white-pages/details.htm&QN=Martin&QF=E8&QC=Richmond&QS=VA&wpg=1&pubcat Go

InfoSpace®

Home | My Lookup History | Help

yellow pages white pages web search maps & directions browse categories
search by phone near an address email search world directories

Set your [Default Location](#).

Sponsor results by Intelius

[E Martin Unlisted Phone Number & Address Found](#). - Information was found in Public Records, including Age, Address History and Family Members.
[www.intelius.com](#)

Listing Details for: E F Martin , Richmond, VA [Return to Listings](#)

SPONSORS

PEOPLE SEARCH

Powered by Intelius

First Name
E

Last Name
Martin

State
VA

Useful Links

- [Search by Phone](#)
- [Search by Age](#)
- [Search by Maiden Name](#)

E F Martin 804-288-3413

4917 Wythe Ave
Richmond, VA 23226-1212


[Update/Remove](#)
[Add to Outlook](#)
[Send Listing to a Friend](#)

[Current Phone Number, Address and Address History Available for E Martin](#)
[Email E Martin at Reunion.com](#)

Find Neighbors

Find Businesses Near This Location
[Restaurants, Hotels & Motels, Airports, Auto Repair & Service, Banks, Department Stores, Night Clubs, Movie Theatres](#)

Navigate the map | Get Driving Directions
Click anywhere on the map to center on a point and use the arrows to move in any direction.



Neighbor search

Reverse look-up

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer window displaying the InfoSpace website. The address bar shows a search for 'Wythe Ave, Richmond, VA'. The page features a 'PEOPLE SEARCH' section with a search form for First Name, Last Name, and State (set to VA). Below the search form, the results for 'White Pages Results for: Wythe Ave, Richmond, VA' are displayed, showing three entries: Basil M. Surgent, Anna Hill, and Janet Hill. Each entry includes a phone number, address, and links to 'Send Listing to a Friend' and 'Send a FREE card'. A sidebar on the right contains a 'PEOPLE SEARCH' form and 'Useful Links'.

Richmond VA White Pages Listings - InfoSpace - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites

Address http://revdb.infospace.com/home/white-pages/revdb?kcf=wpus&otmpl=white-pages/results.htm&searchtype=revaddress&qt=Wythe%20Ave&q=Richmond&q=VA&ql=10 Go

InfoSpace® Home | My Lookup History | Help

yellow pages · white pages · web search · maps & directions · browse categories
search by phone · near an address · email search · world directories

Set your Default Location.

SPONSORS

Find local singles

PEOPLE SEARCH
Powered by Intelius

First Name Last Name State
[] [] VA Search

White Pages Results for: Wythe Ave, Richmond, VA Search Again

Results 1-10 of 227 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 Next >

SPONSORS

Find local singles

Surgent, Basil M 804-353-9371
3400 Wythe Ave
Richmond, VA 23221-1519
[Add to Outlook](#)
[Send Listing to a Friend](#)
[Send a FREE card](#)

• Current Phone Number, Address and Address History Available for Basil Surgent
• Email Basil Surgent at Reunion.com
• Pull a credit report on Basil Surgent today!

Hill, Anna 804-213-0092
3401 Wythe Ave
Richmond, VA 23221-1518
[Add to Outlook](#)
[Send Listing to a Friend](#)
[Send a FREE card](#)

• Current Phone Number, Address and Address History Available for Anna Hill
• Reunite with Classmate Anna Hill at Reunion.com
• Pull a credit report on Anna Hill today!

Hill, Janet 804-213-0092
3401 Wythe Ave
Richmond, VA 23221-1518
[Add to Outlook](#)
[Send Listing to a Friend](#)
[Send a FREE card](#)

PEOPLE SEARCH
Powered by Intelius

First Name
[]

Last Name
[]

State
VA

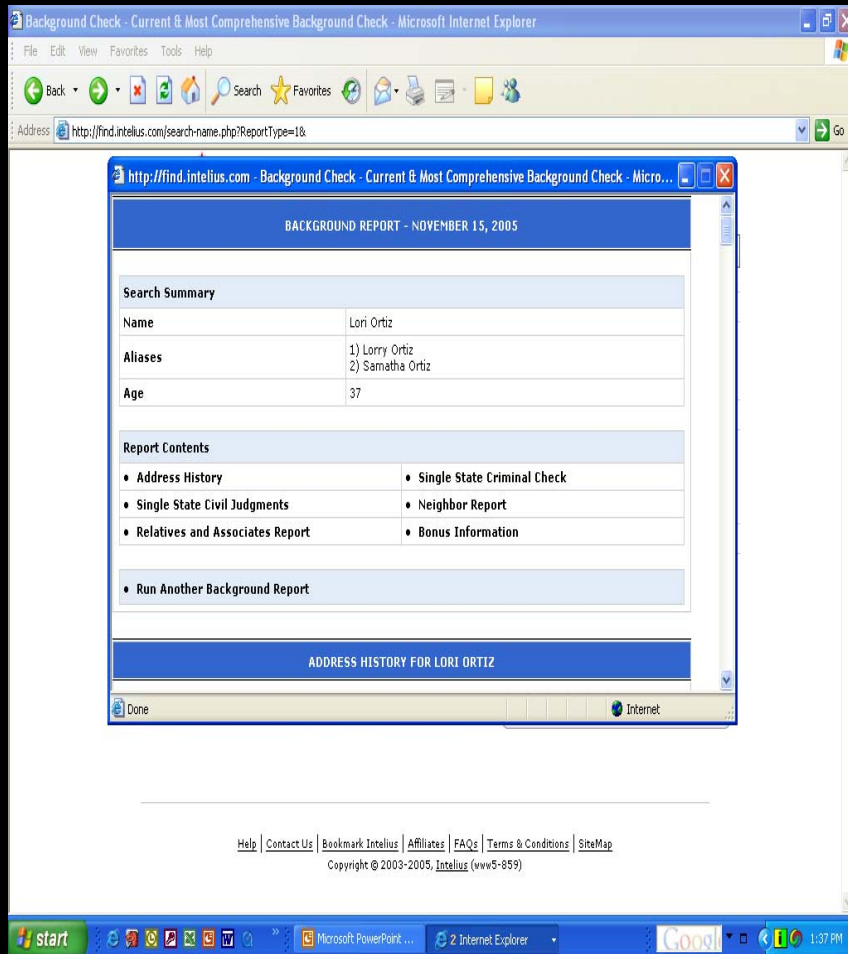
Search

Useful Links
[Search by Phone](#)
[Search by Age](#)

start Microsoft PowerPoint ... Richmond VA White P... Google 1:26 PM

- Name... address, phone, neighbors, businesses, gateway
- Address... Name, phone
- Phone... Name, address
- E-mail... Name, address

Background check...



- Links to “find.intelius.com” Background Check
 - Current and previous addresses with dates of residence
 - Aliases
 - Age and date of birth
 - Roommates
 - Relatives and associates
 - Neighbors
 - Criminal check
 - Civil judgments
 - Property report
 - Value, title, detailed property information, neighborhood demographics (age, ethnicity, marital status, language, education), crime, commute, satellite photo of address (GlobeXplorer)
 - Credit report

Imagery....

GlobeXplorer Aerial Photos Satellite Images and Maps - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://www.globexplorer.com/> Go Links >>

GlobeXplorer Delivering the World's Largest Online Library of Aerial / Satellite Imagery and Maps

Products Industries Our Content Our Company Find Image Help

Launch Viewer **ImageAtlas**

United States International

Find and purchase images.

Address

City

State ZIP Code (optional)

Launch Viewer and Find Image

From standard images and maps to detailed property information.

Image Viewers

ImageAtlas

2D and 3D Viewers

Incorporate our suite of online imagery and map viewers into your web site or intranet, complete with shopping carts and custom branding.

- Product Information
- Industry Solutions & Case Studies
- **Free Trial: Try our new Property Analyst real estate research viewer!**

Developer Tools

ImageBuilder

Custom Viewing Solutions

Seamlessly integrate aeriels, satellite images, and property information into your web application with our developer toolkits and mapping API's.

- Product Information
- Industry Solutions & Case Studies

Mapping Services

ImageConnect

GIS and CAD Plug-ins

Download geo-referenced aerial and satellite photos into your mapping projects with our extensions and web services.

- Product Information
- Industry Solutions & Case Studies

Breaking News

[Property Analyst Now Available](#)
GlobeXplorer's next-generation real estate information viewer is now available. [Try the free San Francisco County demo now.](#)

[GlobeXplorer Acquires AirPhotoUSA](#)
We've just purchased the nation's leading hi-resolution aerial firm.

[GlobeXplorer Earth Mapping Blog!](#)
See our president's insights on GlobeXplorer and the spatial industry.

Content Partners

Start Microsoft PowerPoint - [res...] GlobeXplorer Aerial P... Internet 8:22 PM

Databases...

MetaLib - Find Database - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: <http://metalib.vccs.edu/V/KN7366D7R5VN4TCR7A4J6Q87K4F5B1C1B8F176JLXTB9YTAJ-42662?unc=find-db-1-category&mode=category&sequence=000000087&restic>

VCU Libraries

QuickSearch Find Database Find e-Journal CrossSearch My Space Login to My Space

Find Database Database List Guest

Database List

Found 10 Databases

Table View Brief View

ICPSR - USA <Previous Next>

Database Name	Type	Actions
ICPSR	Other	i +
InfoTrac OneFile (Gale)	Some Full Text	i
InfoTrac Web	Some Full Text	i +
REIS: Regional Economic Information System	Other	i +
VCU Libraries Catalog	Library Catalog	i + Q
LexisNexis Statistical	Some Full Text	i +
STAT-USA Databases	Other	i +
Statistical Abstract of the United States	Other	i +
U.S. Census	Other	i +
USA Counties	Other	i +

<Previous Next>

VCU Libraries

Ask a Librarian

Done Internet

Start Microsoft PowerPoint - [res...] MetaLib - Find Datab... 8:25 PM

MetaLib - Find Database - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: http://metalib.vccs.edu/V/KN7366D7R5VN4TCR7A4J6Q87K4F5B1C1B8F176JLXTB9YTAJ-42662?unc=find-db-14pde_handle=GUEST

VCU Libraries

QuickSearch Find Database Find e-Journal CrossSearch My Space Login to My Space

Find Database Database List Guest

Find Database

Category Titles Locate

Category

Arts
Business
Conference Proceedings
Data / Statistics
Education
Electronic Reference Shelf
Format
General Research
Government Law Politics

Sub-category

Interdisciplinary(16)
Company/Industry(9)
Economics(10)
Investments(4)
IT(5)
Management(6)
Marketing(5)
Real Estate(1)
Taxes(2)

GO

Show all Show unrestricted

Databases AtoZ: [A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#) 123

VCU Libraries

Ask a Librarian

Done Internet

Start Microsoft PowerPoint - [res...] MetaLib - Find Datab... 8:27 PM

Systematic Observation

Observation

- Episodic -- one-time look at phenomenon
- Continuing – on-going activities
- Obtrusively or unobtrusively
- Personal or electronic
- “Mystery shopper”

Counting

- A major virtue of simple counting is that it can be carried out by unskilled researchers.
- Careful training is needed.
- Provide a clear checklist of what to count
 - Counting students wearing school logos
 - Counting the number of pedestrians and/or automobiles passing a site.
 - Estimating the proportion of men, women, or children at particular events.

Measuring

- Sherlock Holmes
 - Type of mud on shoes of seemingly innocent houseguest (an accretion)
 - Size of a footprint near the trellis (a physical trace)
 - Missing matches on the left side of the matchbook of the left-handed smoker (an erosion)

- the observance of litter or graffiti
- garbage counts of liquor bottles used to estimate consumption levels where interview data would be unreliable (garbology)
- wear on particular magazines in physician waiting rooms that suggests popularity
- radio settings of car radios in a repair shop
- Rolling stops of vehicles

Concerns

- Distractions
 - Fatigue
 - Bias of time of day
-
- Compare results among researchers
 - Control of researchers

Seeking patterns in observations

- Anthropologists count and use physical traces.. But generally go into the field, watch what people do, and try to synthesize their observations by detecting the patterns that seem to be there.
 - Influence in product choices at point of sale
 - How do people check price?

Concerns

- not getting significant detail into records
 - not recording observations immediately after the episode
 - difficult to “infer a state of mind”
 - problem with inference (drawing generalizations)
 - places / times
-
- multiple practice sessions
 - triangulation

- Mechanical or electronic

Low cost survey research...

Research has never been as inexpensive as it is now that the Internet is easier than ever to navigate.

Decisions

- What questions should be asked?
- How should questions be asked?
- Who should answer questions?
- Can the answers be reduced to a few simple questions?
- Should the answer be open-ended?
- Does anything need to be shown to the respondent?

Common survey methods...

- Intercept (personal interviews at common location)
- Telephone
- Internet
- Focus groups
- Group administration

On-line survey

- www.surveymonkey.com

The screenshot shows the SurveyMonkey.com homepage in a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The browser's address bar displays "http://www.surveymonkey.com/". The website's header includes the SurveyMonkey logo and navigation links: Home, New Survey, My Surveys, List Management, My Account, and Help Center. A banner at the top reads "Welcome to a revolutionary tool." and "Intelligent survey software for serious primates of all species. SurveyMonkey has a single purpose: to enable anyone to create professional online surveys quickly and easily. Find out what everyone is [talking about...](#)".

On the left side, there is a "Member Login" section with fields for Username and Password, and a "Remember me" checkbox. Below this is a "Tell Me More..." section with links to Overview, Features, Pricing, Testimonials, and Signup Now. Further down is a "Forgot Login?" section with an "Enter Email" field and an "Enter >>" button.

The main content area features three sections:

- Design Survey**: A section titled "Design Survey" with a sub-header "Example Website Survey". It describes the survey editor's capabilities, such as selecting from over a dozen types of questions (single choice, multiple choice, rating scales, drop-down menus, and more...), powerful options to require answers to any question, control the flow with custom skip logic, and even randomize answer choices to eliminate bias. It also mentions complete control over colors and layout. A link "View Example Survey" is provided.
- Collect Responses**: A section titled "Collect Responses" that describes the "Invitation Popup" feature. It explains how to create a popup invitation for a survey, customize its appearance (background color, font color, etc.), and use it to track responses. A link "View Example Survey" is provided.
- Analyze Results**: A section titled "Analyze Results" that describes the "Results Summary" feature. It mentions that users can view all pages and questions, and a link "View Results Summary" is provided.

The bottom of the page shows the Windows taskbar with the Start button, several application icons, and the Google search bar. The system clock indicates "Monday, November 14, 2005" and "4:49 PM".

On-line survey

- www.zoomerang.com

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Online survey software tools for nonprofits: Zoomerang zNonProfit - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows the URL "http://info.zoomerang.com/znonprofit/index.htm". The website has a yellow and blue color scheme. At the top, the Zoomerang logo is displayed with the tagline "Easiest way to ask, Fastest way to know.™". Below the logo, a navigation bar shows "Home > Survey Products > zNonProfit". The main content area features a large banner for "zNonProfit" with a photo of a man. The banner text includes "A powerful online survey offering designed for nonprofits." and "Sign up for a subscription to zNonProfit!". Below this, pricing is listed: "1 year subscription \$350.00 USD" and "3 month subscription \$99.00 USD", each with a "Sign Up" button. A circular badge on the right of the banner says "40% OFF OUR STANDARD PRICING!". Below the banner, text states "Powerful online survey software, at a 40% discount for nonprofits!" and "Now nonprofits can afford professional-quality online surveys. zNonProfit provides full access to Zoomerang zPro, the world's leading online survey tool, but at a significant savings from our standard pricing." It also mentions "Easy to create, simple to deploy and a snap to respond to, Zoomerang surveys are faster—and much cheaper—than paper, print and mail." A list of benefits is shown with checkmarks: "No technical expertise required. No expensive consultants to hire.", "Start using immediately. Nothing to download, install or integrate.", and "Secure and confidential." Below this, it says "Most importantly, with a zNonProfit discount you still get full use of all the powerful features that have made Zoomerang zPro the world's leading online survey tool, used by Fortune 500 companies and organizations of all sizes in over 200 countries." and provides a link to "Compare Zoomerang zNonProfit to Zoomerang's other online survey products." On the right side, a quote from Joy Marcrum, Director of Marketing at United Way, Nashville, states "Using Zoomerang online surveys is a great means of improving donor relationships." Below the quote, it lists "Create surveys for: Fundraising, Advocacy, Volunteer Recruitment, Program Satisfaction, Membership, Or any topic you require". The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the start button, several application icons, and the system clock at 4:53 PM.

Online survey software tools for nonprofits: Zoomerang zNonProfit - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://info.zoomerang.com/znonprofit/index.htm> Go

zoomerang Easiest way to ask, Fastest way to know.™

Home > Survey Products > zNonProfit

zNonProfit A powerful online survey offering designed for nonprofits.

Sign up for a subscription to zNonProfit!
Create an unlimited number of surveys, with no additional per-survey charge.

1 year subscription \$350.00 USD [Sign Up](#)

3 month subscription \$99.00 USD [Sign Up](#)

Or try the [free version](#)

40% OFF OUR STANDARD PRICING!

Powerful online survey software, at a 40% discount for nonprofits!

Now nonprofits can afford professional-quality online surveys. zNonProfit provides full access to [Zoomerang zPro](#), the world's leading online survey tool, but at a significant savings from our standard pricing.

Easy to create, simple to deploy and a snap to respond to, Zoomerang surveys are faster—and much cheaper—than paper, print and mail.

- ✓ **No technical expertise required. No expensive consultants to hire.**
- ✓ **Start using immediately. Nothing to download, install or integrate.**
- ✓ **Secure and confidential.**

Most importantly, with a zNonProfit discount you still get full use of all the powerful features that have made Zoomerang zPro the world's leading online survey tool, used by Fortune 500 companies and organizations of all sizes in over 200 countries.

[Compare Zoomerang zNonProfit to Zoomerang's other online survey products.](#)

“Using Zoomerang online surveys is a great means of improving donor relationships.”

Joy Marcrum
Director of Marketing
United Way, Nashville

Create surveys for:
Fundraising
Advocacy
Volunteer Recruitment
Program Satisfaction
Membership
Or any topic you require

start Online survey softwa... Google 4:53 PM

On-line focus group

Microsoft Internet Explorer window showing the website **Yourfocusgroup.com** - Customer Feedback Made Easy.

Address: <http://yourfocusgroup.com/>

Navigation links: [About Us](#), [Product Info](#), [Purchase](#), [Contact Us](#)

Member Login: Username Password [SUBMIT](#)

Links: [New User](#) | [Forgot Password](#)

yourfocusgroup.com™

SIGN UP NOW!
for a
FREE TRIAL

AS SEEN IN

Entrepreneur
37
STARTUP
Secrets

The do-it-yourself Marketing Application

[Learn More >>](#)

THE DO-IT-YOURSELF MARKETING APPLICATION

Wouldn't you like to be a fly on the wall and see exactly how your customers will view your marketing efforts – and your competitor's? With yourfocusgroup.com, you can - quickly and affordably. From websites, to advertisements to logos, you will learn how your customer really interacts with your materials. Designed for marketing and advertising professionals, yourfocusgroup.com takes minutes to get started and can be run anytime from anywhere. The value to your company will be incredible. Take the free trial today!

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Taskbar: Start, Microsoft PowerPoint - [res...], Yourfocusgroup.com ...

System tray: Internet, 10:19 PM

Backwards Research

Traditional (forward)

1. Define the research problem
2. Check secondary sources
3. Determine research strategy
4. Estimate research cost
5. Design questionnaire
6. Design sample
7. Implement research design
8. Analyze data
9. Write report

Efficient (backward)

1. Determine key decisions are to be made using results
2. Determine what information will help make the best decisions
3. Prepare a prototype report and ask if this is what will best help make the decisions
4. Determine the analysis that will be necessary to fill in the report
5. Determine what questions must be asked to provide the data required by the analysis
6. Ascertain whether the needed questions have been answered already
7. Follow steps 6 – 9 of forward research

The cornerstones is “getting things done”:

- Start at the end.
- Keep it simple.
- Think it through to the end.

Virginia Commonwealth University

- School of Mass Communications
 - Undergraduate majors in public relations, advertising, and journalism
 - M.S. in Mass Communications (Strategic Public Relations) The PRogram
 - M.S. in Mass Communications (Advertising) Adcenter
 - Art Direction
 - Copywriting
 - Client Services
 - Media Planning
 - Brand Management
 - Ph.D. in Media, Art and Text (pending approval)

Final suggestions....

- There are a number of ways you can try to benefit from market research without spending a fortune.
- First of all, there's secondary research, the kind you don't have to pay for. Secondary research refers to what's already out there. This is information you can find yourself rather easily and for free by accessing Web-based directories and resources or visiting your local library.
- Primary research, the point where you would normally hire a research firm, is what helps you find information specific to your needs. There are a number of ways you could go about acquiring both quantitative and qualitative primary research for less. If your customer base is online, and you have an e-mail list available, the Web is a good, inexpensive vehicle for conducting surveys. You can use sites such as Zoomerang.com and SurveyMonkey.com, which help you design your own online surveys, contact your sample, and tabulate your results in real time. For on-line focus groups, Yourfocusgroup.com can help.
- If your customers aren't online and you're not sure how to go about doing your research, a cost-effective alternative to hiring a full-service market research firm is an independent market research consultant who works out of his or her home. Such consultants cost \$75 to \$150 an hour, and their assistance in conducting competitive analysis, designing a phone or mail survey, organizing a focus group or analyzing results can be less expensive than your paying a full-service firm to do everything.
- Another alternative is to hire a data collection firm, which will recruit people for focus groups or conduct interviews. A data collection firm is more affordable than a full-service firm, but it won't tabulate results or product reports for you.
- If you're tight on time to conduct research yourself or don't have the money to hire anyone, approach schools in your area. Many research classes assign projects involving real data in real markets. Volunteer your organization as a subject - you could get some very smart research results at no cost if you are willing to open up and give them the data they need.
- If you're planning on doing everything yourself, keep in mind that without a disinterested party involved, there is a chance that you may word your questions or hear customers' answers in a self-serving way. Having a third party look over your questions or go over your research with you will help ensure your conclusions are not biased.

the **pr**ogram

**Fast-track Executive Master's
Degree in**

Strategic Public Relations

**Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Mass Communications**

<http://www.has.vcu.edu/mac>

the **pr**ogram

- **Required: A new generation of communications professionals who are able to:**
 - **function at the highest levels of management**
 - **apply sophisticated strategic thinking to accomplish organizational objectives.**

M.S. in Mass Communications (Strategic Public Relations)

- Strategic planning**
- Strategic management**
- Writing and editing**
- Leadership and team building**
- New technologies**
- Research and evaluation**
- Ethics and law**
- Today's global marketplace**

the **p**rogram

- **Fast-track Executive Master's Degree**
- **30 credit hours, including a collateral area**
 - **nonprofit management**
 - **environmental policy**
 - **global marketing management**

the **p**rogram

- **Convenient timing**
 - You are encouraged to continued full-time public relations employment.
 - Sessions meet during 30 Friday-Saturday blocks scheduled over 11 months.
 - You begin in July and graduate in May.

the **p**rogram

- **Knowledgeable colleagues**
 - **Admission requirements include**
 - **academic background in public relations (university or accreditation program)**
 - **at least two years of appropriate public relations experience**
 - **Other requirements at:**
<http://www.vcu.edu/graduate/>

the **p**rogram

- **Professional studies**
 - **Work with experienced, senior-level professional and members of the school's full-time faculty**
 - **Learn by doing with real case studies and campaigns**

the **p**rogram

- **Preparing for the future**
 - **Strong emphasis on emerging technologies**
 - **Optional international study tour takes you abroad to Beijing and Shanghai in 2007 to learn more about the role of strategic public relations in other cultures.**

the **p**rogram

- **Tuition and fees for 30-hour program**
 - **Virginia resident** **\$27,780**
 - **Non-Resident** **\$27,900**
- **On-line application**
- **The first cohort begins in July, 2006**

the **pr**ogram

**Fast-track Executive Master's
Degree in**

Strategic Public Relations

**Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Mass Communications**

<http://www.has.vcu.edu/mac>

- **Every Click They Make**
- Your online customers already tell you what they think of your Web site and products. All you need to do is learn how to listen. Here's how to extract valuable information from your customers.
- **From:** [Inc. Magazine, Sept 1999](#) | **By:** Jim Sterne
- **Your customers are constantly telling you what they think of your Web site, your company, and your products. All you need to do is learn how to listen**
- Last year Playboy Enterprises sued former Playmate of the Year Terri Welles for using its trademarked phrases on her advertising-supported Web site. Playboy's lawyers asked me to be an expert witness for the plaintiff, which meant I had to spend several hours poring over Welles's site or risk letting down our noble judicial system (honest, Honey). Unfortunately, duty also required that I spend at least as much time examining her Web-server logs to better understand how the site was being used. I had to promise the attorneys that I wouldn't bill them for the times I fell asleep. But excruciatingly dull as they are, server logs are your friends.
- Imagine how you could improve sales in a physical store if you could track customers' every footstep, every Charmin squeeze, every banana sniff. Server logs perform that function for Web sites. The logs record all the files--pages, images, audioclips--that your site sends to link-clicking surfers. In person, server logs aren't much to look at: line after stultifying line of which computer (not which person) asked for what file when. But they offer up the first round of information about who visits your site and what they're after.
- With the help of log-analysis software (trying to read one of these suckers yourself would be like perusing a five-mile-long grocery-store receipt), you can glean from server logs everything from how to improve navigation to what people think of your products. Do visitors travel from your product description to your price list to your warranty information and then bail? Maybe you need to offer better warranties. Do they click to your home page from a banner ad and then abandon ship? Maybe it's time to change the link so that it goes from the banner directly to the product advertised. Which of your Frequently Asked Questions is, in fact, most frequently asked? An oft-accessed FAQ is a red flag signaling a problem with your user manual, your packaging, your advertising--even your products.
- Server logs record not only what people do on your site but also how they got there, information that's tremendously helpful in budgeting for site advertising and marketing. Do the bulk of visitors to your insecticide company's site type in the URL? That suggests your off-line publicity is doing its job. Or are they coming from Backyard.com? If so, you might consider becoming that site's exclusive sponsor, in order to forestall competitors' access to a hot source of prospects. More likely, they're finding you through search engines, in which case your log will tell you which keywords brought them there. If people find you more often by searching for *ants* than *spiders*, think about replacing that black widow on your home page with something that has 25% fewer legs.
- When sites are well designed, server logs become even more informative. If your site simply lets users choose from a list of products, you'll learn which holds the most interest to potential customers. But if you categorize your products and ask customers to work their way through more general information in order to reach specifics, you'll learn a great deal more. For instance, RPM Consulting does sophisticated network-management and internetworking consulting. A network is a network, right? Yet the company asks site visitors to choose from:
 - Banking & Financial Institutions
 - Hospitals & Health Care
 - Insurance
 - Pharmaceuticals
 - Manufacturing
- Once RPM knows which market segments it is reaching best on-line, it can adjust its site to cater to those customers--or to enhance its site's appeal to the no-shows.

- **A Do-It-Yourself Customer Panel**
- Do you want to put some bang into your market research without spending the big bucks? Try conducting your own customer panel.
- **From:** [Peggy Morrow and Associates](#) | March 2003 **By:** Peggy Morrow
- As a small-business owner, you might think you can't afford the services of a fancy marketing firm to keep track of how you are doing. Wrong! It can be easy and economical to measure your level of service. And it is a critical step toward achieving a level of service that will give you the competitive edge.
-
- One measurement tool that is inexpensive to administer is a customer panel. It is a little different than a focus group in that a representative group of managers and employees of the company are present in the room with the customers. A more traditional focus group has the customers or idea generators in a separate room with a two-way mirror or not present at all.
- A customer panel will give you lots of valuable information to help you improve your service or product. It is also one of the tools that will help you plant the culture of service deep within your organization by keeping the voice of the customer in front of your employees.
- It will also allow you to really hear the voice of your customer. Reading feedback from customers in a formal feedback report is one thing; actually hearing and seeing your customer say it is even more powerful.
- Use this a step-by-step guide for conducting your own customer panel.
- **Establish the purpose of your panel:**
- Determine what you want to get out of a the exercise. Customer panels, in general, can be used for several purposes:
 1. To determine your customers' opinions of the level of service they are currently receiving.
 2. To determine marketing issues on product acceptance, features, ideas for future products, and other product-related things you might want to know.
 3. To determine how well your customers' expectations are being met in the area of customer service or the features of your products.
 4. To use the information derived from the panel or panels to improve service levels and/or products.
- **Choose and assemble participants:**
- Usually two hours in length, the ideal customer panel will include approximately 12 to14 customer participants. Key people or the entire staff from the department or product line being discussed should also attend and observe, but they should not participate unless asked a direct question by one of the participants.
- **1. Develop a list of customers you would like to participate.** Choose a cross section of some who are extremely important to you, some that may have had problems, or those who you feel will not be shy in sharing their opinions. To get 12 to14 participants, you'll want to develop a list of at least double the number of participants. The number invited varies somewhat depending on how eager people will be to give their opinion. For instance, with an NFL football team I conducted a panel for, everyone wanted to give their opinions, and we had little trouble filling the panel slots. On the other hand, a credit union had trouble getting anyone to participate.
- Call some of them, tell them what you're doing, and solicit feedback from them on the best time and place to meet.
- Determine the people from your company who you want to attend and invite them, too. Explain the purpose and copy them on the invitation to the possible attendees.
- **2. Once day and time are established, find a room.** Be sure to make arrangements -- and don't forget the details. Refreshments, small thank-you gifts or money if they're being paid, seating, and any presentation equipment you might need should be available. Also, remember seating for the observers and to include flip charts to capture comments. The room you choose needs to be one where you can tape paper to the walls and that will be relatively quiet.
- **3. Invite the participants.** You can do it with a formal mailed invitation, via e-mail or the telephone. The method depends on how much time you have to assemble the panel and how you feel most comfortable communicating with them.
- **4. Send confirmation correspondence to participants with details of where, when, etc.** Be sure to include details about what you will be asking them to do, too.
- **5. Two days before the event, call each panel member (do not e-mail) to reconfirm.** This is a critical step. You need to confirm twice; otherwise, at the last minute, people may decide not to come -- unless, of course, you are paying them \$50 or more, then there are almost always no shows.
- Once the participants arrive, use the introductory agenda below.
- **Suggested introductory agenda:**
 1. Introduce yourself with your title and length of time with the company.
 2. Explain the purpose of the panel and what you will be asking them to do. "We are here this evening to get your ideas on what you like and don't like about certain features of our product" or "We'd like your ideas on what you expect when you do business with us."
 3. Explain the process detailed below on how you will go about collecting their ideas.
 4. Explain your role as the facilitator -- that you are there to organize and move the discussion along, but you will not be offering any opinions of your own.
- **Conducting the panel:**
- **1. Introduce the "task statement."** That is a succinct statement of what information you want from the panelists. For instance, "What are we doing well?" "What needs to

- **Competitive Intelligence on a Shoestring**
- You can learn a lot by researching online and targeting the right people.
- **From:** Inc.com | September 2001 **By:** Jan Gardner
- Some big companies have entire departments devoted to gathering competitive intelligence. Yet even soloists can get a leg up on the competition through online research and the cooperation of key people.
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- Just don't get so wrapped up in gathering information that you wait too long to act, warns John Nolan, a retired federal intelligence officer and founder of [Phoenix Consulting Group](#), experts in competitive intelligence. Early on in your research into a competitor's upcoming product launch, you may have the opportunity to develop a new product yourself or close out your competitor's distribution channel. The longer you wait, the fewer options you have to respond to a competitor's move.
- Sherry Dickerson, vice president of [Washington Researchers](#), a company that provides training in competitive intelligence, cautions entrepreneurs not to lie or misrepresent themselves or who they work for. Read up on the Economic Espionage Act because it governs the legalities of gathering competitive intelligence. If your company has an ethics policy, make sure you understand it. If your company doesn't have a policy, a good place to turn for help developing one is the [Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals](#).
- **1. Mine the free research online.**
- **Databases**
Start with [Google.com](#). Yet Dickerson recommends using other search engines to find the one that gives the best results for your industry.
- On Google and [AltaVista](#), type in "link: www.whatevercompanyyouwant.com" and you will get a list of Web sites that link to the specified company's Web site. It's a good way to find out the companies that have an interest in or are doing business with the company you're researching.
- [InvisibleWeb.com](#) is a directory of more than 10,000 databases, archives, and search engines. Use it to research companies, industries, and business publications.
- [Northern Light](#) conducts searches of industry-focused Web pages, market research, economic analysis, and company reports. It also sells research by the page, so you can buy only the pages you need, instead of having to buy the entire report. Before you pay for information, check whether you can get the same information for free from another site like [PR Newswire](#), suggests Estelle Metayer, president of the Montreal-based [Competia](#), which offers training and consulting in competitive intelligence.
- [Marketresearch.com](#) is a collection of more than 40,000 publications from more than 350 leading research firms.
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- **2. Enlist the help of everyone at your company and as many customers, vendors, and others as possible.**
- Sure, you can do a lot of research on the Internet, but talking to people remains the best way to gather intelligence. Ask your employees to be your eyes and ears in the marketplace, in your industry -- even in your company's reception area.
- "Your receptionist can be one of your most valuable resources," says Nolan. In one company where the purchasing manager routinely keeps vendors waiting for 10 to 15 minutes after they arrive, the receptionist writes down what the vendors talk about. Sometimes they talk about the deal they'll offer to the company. The receptionist e-mails that information to the purchasing manager, so he is better prepared for the negotiations.
- Capitalizing on internal resources is the single best way to conduct competitive intelligence, Nolan says. Leverage the relationships your employees have with other folks in your industry, especially their colleagues from previous jobs, he says. Consider approaching company employees who are knowledgeable but undervalued as resources of competitive information, such as an accountant or quality assurance manager.
- To help employees know what kind of information you're after, circulate a list of the factors that are critical to your company's success, says Jerry Miller, director of the [Competitive Intelligence Center](#) at Simmons College in Boston.
- Paul Scharfman, founder and CEO of [Specialty Cheese Co.](#) in Wisconsin, eschews online research and focuses on letting every employee and customer know that he values tips they pass on to him. "The more people who know you care, the more information you're going to get," he says. He once kept a distributor from taking business away from him by confronting the distributor after a customer told Scharfman the distributor had offered him a better deal. At a trade show, Scharfman discovered that the distributor was doing everything he could to gain business, even at a low margin. He told the distributor it isn't fair to steal someone else's customers. The distributor backed off.
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- **3. Cultivate relationships with key experts.**
- Identify experts in your industry or market and develop a relationship with them. The Web can help you identify experts, but it's no substitute for a personal relationship.
- Gaining access to experts helps you keep ahead of published reports. Be sure that you send these experts interesting information that you come across, so you are offering help as well as asking for it, Metayer says.
- In order to get information, you may have to give information. You need to know where to draw the line on giving out information. "You're going to be much more interesting to talk to if you have a bone you can throw them," Dickerson says. It's good to practice role-plays with your colleagues and prepare comebacks, but don't be surprised if you're rebuffed, she says.

- **Market Research on the Cheap!**

January 24, 2005

- Q: Hello, I really enjoy your columns. Anyway, I read everywhere about the need for a good business plan. However, I have rarely seen good tips on how to research the market, potential customers, competition, etc. Could you give some further detail on how to achieve this? How does someone with limited resources (i.e. money) come up with strong data in these areas? Thanks.

Tom, Minneapolis

A: First, thanks for the compliment, and second, I would be happy to provide additional info on this important subject. There are many inexpensive resources available that can help you plot your course. Here are your best bets:

Trade associations: Every industry has a trade association connected to it and these groups are a wealth of information. Find one associated with your area and contact them. Explain what you are doing and ask about survey data and research reports available. Get copies of their publications. Ask whether they have a start-up resource kit available – many do.

Trade shows: Consider also attending the leading association trade show. These shows will put you in touch with hundreds of like-minded individuals. Meeting them and picking their brain can:

- Save you a lot of time
- Tell exactly who your customers will be
- Provide experienced feedback about your plans
- Let you know learn more about costs
- Warn you of potential pitfalls, and
- Save you from overly-optimistic plans.

Trade magazines: Each industry also usually has one or more trade magazines which may or may not be part of the leading trade association. Find the magazine for your industry and get several back copies. You should be able to notice industry trends, mistakes to avoid, potential costs, and much more.

Web sites: Here are a few that specifically may be helpful for this stage of your entrepreneurial journey:

- www.census.gov: The U.S. Census Bureau site has a lot of free demographic data.
- www.TSNN.com: This is a searchable database of trade shows worldwide.
- www.SBA.gov/sbdc: The SBA's Small Business Development Centers offer low cost help to entrepreneurs.
- <http://amiga.adage.com/de/ad/>— The home of American Demographics, a monthly magazine that offers information on consumer trends, and analysis. This is a pay service.
- www.hoovers.com— Hoover's offers business and industry data as well as sales, marketing, business development, and other information on public and private companies. This is also a fee-for-content site.
- www.marketresearch.com— This site offers over 50,000 market research articles from more than 350 publishers, categorized by industry.

Interviews and experiential research: While reading is great, nothing beats actually talking with people associated with your business. There are two groups of people you need to meet and interview: